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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1430TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 12 April 1994, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

- Seminar to Review the Political, Economic and Social Conditions in the Remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories (10-12 1994)
- Cooperation with intergovernmental bodies

  Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994)
- Summer session of the Special Committee
- Question of sending visiting missions to Territories

  Visiting Mission to Tokelau
- Expressions of farewell

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

SEMINAR TO REVIEW THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE REMAINING NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (10-12 MAY 1994)

The CHAIRMAN: As representatives are aware, I will be returning to my country, Papua New Guinea, by the end of this week. Since the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, which has the same membership, was scheduled to meet this morning, I took this opportunity to request a plenary meeting of the Committee to update members on the current state of the Committee's work.

The first matter is the Seminar at Headquarters, part of the programme to implement the General Assembly resolution (resolution 46/181) on the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, by the year 2000. Preparations for the Seminar are well under way. The Secretariat has informed me that all the invitations have been extended to the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, guests and non-governmental organizations that were selected or recommended by the Bureau of the Committee.

As representatives are aware, the Seminar will take place at Headquarters from 10 to 12 May 1994. This is, in a sense, a measure to economize on our limited resources. As the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is to take place in Barbados a little earlier, and as a number of representatives from the Non-Self-Governing Territories will be attending this important Conference, the Bureau decided to hold the Seminar immediately after the Global Conference so that some representatives could travel to New York for the Seminar from Barbados rather than from the Pacific, because of the

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distance involved. In this way, cost-saving measures have been taken seriously into consideration.

The guidelines and rules of procedure of the Seminar will be issued tomorrow as an official document of the United Nations under the symbol A/AC.109/1184. I request members to obtain that information.

COOPERATION WITH INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (BARBADOS, 25 APRIL-6 MAY 1994)

The CHAIRMAN: The Special Committee will be sending to the Conference a delegation composed of three members. This important Conference will be particularly relevant to our work, as most of the Territories with which the Committee is dealing are small island Territories facing the very problems which will be addressed there.

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May I kindly request all delegations that will be participating in the Seminar on behalf of their Governments to consult in Barbados with territorial representatives and others on important aspects of economic, social and cultural developments in the Territories.

SUMMER SESSION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN: With the consent of the Committee, I propose that the summer session take place from 11 July to 22 July.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to the summer session's being held between those dates.

It was so decided.

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

VISITING MISSION TO TOKELAU

The CHAIRMAN: The dates for this Mission, to be arranged in consultation with New Zealand, as the administering Power should be from the end of July to some time in the third week of August. We are still consulting with the administering Power, with the knowledge that the Administrator of the Territory is now on the ground in Tokelau. We should be able to obtain immediate feedback on the actual timing of the Visiting Mission.

I have held an important consultation with the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations concerning the Visiting Mission and I am encouraged by an assurance from the New Zealand authorities that this important Mission will take place.

The administering Power suggested that it would be useful if the Committee ensured that this important Visiting Mission included a member from a country of that region. This practice has proved very useful in the past two visiting missions to Palau, when two members from the region were invited to join the Trusteeship Council Visiting Mission; it was profitable not only for the

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Mission, but also for the people of the Territory. We hope that this will be acceptable to the Committee.

EXPRESSIONS OF FAREWELL

The CHAIRMAN: As Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations for the past 10 or so years, I have worked very closely with the Special Committee of 24, the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly on matters concerning self-determination and decolonization as an important aspect of the work of the United Nations. It has been a singular honour and a distinct pleasure to have had this opportunity to serve with so many distinguished personalities over the years. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to each and every one of you, for the cooperation you have always manifested towards me and towards my delegation and the Government of Papua New Guinea. Our work, while sometimes time-consuming and arduous, has always been in the noble cause of bringing an end to colonialism and bringing about true and complete decolonization. Since many here recall all too vividly the elation they felt personally when their own countries acceded to independence, I am sure that the same single-minded devotion to the cause of decolonization will continue.

Having served as Chairman of the Special Committee of 24 for the past two years, I thought that this would be an appropriate occasion to say a few words about my colleagues in this Committee. At this stage, it only remains for me to express my most sincere appreciation to all its members, whose cooperation and understanding have contributed so much to facilitating the work of the Chairman during the past two years. The friendly relations and harmonious atmosphere among members, the seriousness demonstrated by all in every aspect of our work and the prevailing spirit of

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accommodation have undoubtedly contributed greatly to the progress we have been able to achieve so far.

I remain convinced that if the Committee continues to maintain its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the mandate entrusted to it by the Declaration on decolonization, and that if it continues to work with unity of purpose and a spirit of cooperation, discharging its work with a sense of realism and flexibility, the Committee will achieve the objective of complete decolonization by the year 2000. This is a noble dream, but as well as dreaming we should take action in this Committee and the United Nations as a whole to make it come true.

In conclusion, I wish to tell all the members of the Committee and all the members of the Secretariat that the past years have been extremely rewarding for me personally, and that I shall certainly cherish the cooperation, guidance and friendship which all of you have extended to me during the years in which I have had the pleasure of serving you and the Committee as its Chairman.

We have had some good times and some bad times in the Committee. I hope that the cooperation required of the administering Powers with the Committee and the Territories will continue and be brought to real life. Our excitement in the Committee rooms has been reflected in our audience's own excitement about the dream and the feeling of self-determination, freedom and true democracy. As they live under oppression, they dream and aspire that one day they will be like you and me, living in truly democratic and free countries.

Once again, I take this very special opportunity to wish every success to the Committee and all its members; to the Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ardhaoui, who has done

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excellent work; and to my Vice-Chairmen, who have given me a lot of support. I hope that the partnership we have built will continue even in my capacity as an individual citizen of Papua New Guinea. My country and its Government and people are committed to working with the United Nations in the very important field of decolonization and of bringing about a truly free and democratic world through the work of the United Nations in decolonization.

I wish you farewell, goodbye, bamahuta and God bless.

Mr. NASIER (Indonesia): It is with great pleasure that my delegation pays tribute to you, Sir, for your outstanding service to the Special Committee on decolonization during your tenure as Chairman. It is certainly a measure of your statesmanship that, despite some trying times, you have continuously commanded the deep and abiding respect of the members of the Special Committee. As a result, under your stewardship the Special Committee has not only successfully discharged its mandate, but has even managed to streamline and consolidate its work, under the Working Groups, in order to function more effectively and efficiently in the future. Notwithstanding the differing positions taken by some countries, you have guided our deliberations in difficult circumstances with great sensitivity and dignity, and without ever slackening in your efforts to maintain the unity and solidarity of our Committee. In this and more, you fully justify our unbounded respect and lasting admiration.

As you take leave of us here in New York, Sir, it is time to bid you farewell and extend to you our best wishes; we wish you every success in a long and brilliant career. These wishes are particularly pertinent when a colleague hails from our region, as you do, and from a neighbouring country with which Indonesia enjoys close and cordial relations.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words about my work with him and the Committee. I wish him and his delegation well. I would also like him, through his Mission, to extend my best wishes to his Foreign Minister, who, as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia, has also served with me. I also ask him to say "farewell" on my behalf to his Foreign Minister, whom I know as a friend and a colleague, and also as a leader from our region.

Mr. REMÍREZ DE ESTENOZ BARCIELA (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee (interpretation from Spanish): We have learned, Sir, that you have come to the end of your term as Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and that consequently you will cease to serve as Chairman of this Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, a post that you have occupied effectively and skilfully for a number of years.

Tribute should be paid to you, Ambassador Lohia, for during your chairmanship of the Special Committee you have maintained its prestige and kept up a busy schedule, despite constant attacks and despite lack of cooperation from the majority of the colonial Powers. All in all, whatever the problems, under your chairmanship the Committee of 24 has been able to attain the goals for which it was created and to make progress towards implementing the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In you the peoples of the Pacific who are still under colonial domination have found a defender of their interests and of their right to self-determination. The peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean, though not from your area of the world, have received your constant, careful attention. We should therefore all be grateful to you for the job that you have done. We wish you every success in your future endeavours and hope we may continue to count on you, with your dedication to anti-colonialism, to advise the Committee when circumstances require. We wish you every success and again say "Many thanks".

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Permanent Representative of Cuba and Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee for his kind remarks about my work and for what he said about our common commitment to true decolonization. I would like to take this

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opportunity to thank him and the Government and people of Cuba for their commitment, and to thank him for his help as Vice-Chairman over the years. At one time, when I was unavailable, Cuba took the helm of this Committee for most of the year. I thank him, his Government and his Mission for the commitment they have shown this Committee.

Mr. ABIBI (Congo) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to join in expressing praise to you and to tell you how much we appreciate the way in which you have led our work over the past few years. We have highly valued your commitment, and that of your country, to the cause of decolonization, as well as your qualities as a diplomat. Under your authoritative leadership we have done excellent work in this Committee.

As a former colony, Congo is still very much concerned that the process of granting independence to colonial peoples and countries be successfully concluded. You have made a very valuable contribution to that cause at the head of our Committee. My delegation would like to wish you and your family a safe return to your country and success in your new functions.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Congo for his kind words addressed to me. I would like to say how pleased I have been to work with his delegation on the Committee, and especially with his former Permanent Representative, who would sometimes accompany me to some of the Committee's functions overseas. The help that the representative of Congo has lent to the work of the Chairman is very much appreciated.

Mr. ARDHAOUI (Tunisia), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance (interpretation from French): Coming, as I do, from the Mediterranean region, where we often think back to the legends of history, I am reminded of the proverb: "Happy is the one who has made a long voyage and returned to his country." I can see by your smiling face, Mr. Chairman, that you must be very happy to be returning to your hospitable country - indeed, doubly happy because of your remarkable accomplishments here which, I am sure, will be gratefully remembered, not only by the members of the Committee but by the representatives and people of the territories for which the Committee is responsible.

All of us, Sir, highly esteem your abilities, demeanour and diplomatic bearing. In a spirit of self-sacrifice, you have given freely of your time and energies to be at our constant disposal. Thus you have lent dynamic vitality to our Committee, imbuing it with renewed interest, confidence and trust. This is very important.

My delegation hopes, Sir, that upon your return to Port Moresby you will have duties worthy of your experience and abilities. Though we will miss your presence here, we know that you will be successful in your new endeavours. To you and your family we extend our best wishes for a peaceful and happy life.

We shall always remember you, Ambassador Lohia, and your remarkable accomplishments in furthering decolonization.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Special Committee and representative of Tunisia for his kind remarks. The work of decolonization took me to the shores of his country, which, in a way, had enjoyed the experience of colonialism. Indeed, even after independence, as I understand it,

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there were temptations to return to colonial rule. Yet your people took up arms to maintain its independence. I have visited the graves of the Tunisians who gave their lives for the noble cause of decolonization.

My gratitude goes also to the Government, people and Mission of Tunisia for their dedication in serving this Committee and the United Nations in the field of decolonization. Mr. Ammar Amari and you, Mr. Ardhaoui, have served well as Chairmen of the Subcommittee. Thank you very much for a job well done.

Mr. BANGALI (Sierra Leone), Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee: Mr. Chairman, we have had the privilege of working with you for the last three years; we have admired your diplomatic skills and the negotiating ability for which I believe you are well known.

During this period, too, you have delegated responsibilities to my delegation which I hope we were able to discharge reasonably well. We have therefore learned a lot from you and so will miss you - for this reason and others. But in addition to that, Sir, I have personally been able to forge a friendship with you from which have sprung other contacts and friendships, particularly with representatives of the region from which you come.

I wish you and your family well and I do hope that our paths will cross again very soon. I pledge that my delegation and the African Group will continue the good work that you started in this Committee and have carried on for the past three years. Go well, and good luck.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone and Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee for the kind words he has addressed to me. I wish to say that it was Sierra Leone, in

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the person of Ambassador Koroma, that was presiding over the Special Committee when, as Permanent Representative, I helped him run a seminar on decolonization in Port Moresby in 1985. When Ambassador Koroma arrived in Port Moresby he found friendship with our people. There was a journalist in Papua New Guinea who was also called Koroma, who ran a "Koroma's Corner" in our national newspaper, and Koroma always appeared on the front page of our Post-Courier.

Sierra Leone will go down in history for its work in the decolonization efforts of the United Nations and of this Committee in particular. The members of the delegation of Sierra Leone have certainly taught me much about this work. I thank Ambassador Bangali very much for his kind words and for his kind cooperation with me.

Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee (interpretation from Arabic): Since this is the last meeting to be presided over by you, Ambassador Lohia, I should like, as Rapporteur of the Committee and as representative of my country, to express deep thanks for your efforts to achieve success in the work of our Committee.

In both formal and informal meetings of the Committee, as well as in seminars and study sessions, you have made every effort to carry out the mandate and achieve the objective of the Committee, total decolonization before the end of the twentieth century. Committee members and Secretariat staff will do their utmost to ensure that the Committee maintains its businesslike habits and pursues your work with equal vigour.

I wish you a healthy return to your country, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Syria and Rapporteur of the Special Committee for his kind personal remarks

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and for his comments on the work that is done in the United Nations and in this Committee in the field of decolonization. As Rapporteur, Syria has made the fullest commitment to ensuring that our reports are ready and are properly presented to the General Assembly. I want to thank him for that, both individually and in his capacity as a member of his delegation. I wish him well in the important work he will continue to carry out as Rapporteur.

Mr. GOEL (India): Saying farewell is always very difficult. It becomes even harder when we have to say farewell to a person of the stature of Ambassador Lohia, whose name seems to have become synonymous with the work of the Special Committee on decolonization.

Mr. Chairman, your stewardship of the Committee on decolonization and your skilful work in carrying on the process of decolonization and promoting the efforts of the international community to see the successful fruition of this process have contributed in great measure to the optimism that by the year 2000 we could indeed see the end of the scourge, that we could indeed see the full establishment of a democratic order and a free world.

India's commitment to the process of decolonization is well-known. In that context, and in view of that commitment, we have particularly enjoyed working with you, Sir, and with this Committee, in carrying on this work, the fulfilment of which is our dream and which, indeed, lies at the heart of our very polity.

Papua New Guinea is an important country in our region, a country with which India has always enjoyed a very deep, historic relationship, with age-old ties. It was thus a particular privilege for us to see you, Sir, furthering the work of this Committee. I am confident that, with your skill, your knowledge and your statesmanlike qualities, we will have the benefit of your advice and cooperation and your continued association with this work even after you have returned to your country.

May I wish you, Mr. Chairman, all the best for the future. May I say "Au revoir, bon voyage, and see you again in New York".

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative India for his kind words addressed to me.

(The Chairman)

I wish to say how pleased the Chair has been at the continuing commitment to decolonization of India and its delegation at the United Nations and their work in that regard. Of course, the true spirit of decolonization was demonstrated by the early leaders of that country, Gandhi and Nehru. They were great leaders. The Non-Aligned Movement's work in decolonization was the result of India's commitment to and spirit of decolonization. I thank him very much, and, through him the Government and people of India, for the vision that they gave to the world at that time and have given ever since. I hope that we can see and welcome the true spirit of an open society of truly democratic and freely established institutions, acting in the true spirit of democracy, as soon as possible.

Mr. PURSOO (Grenada): Mr. Chairman, let me first apologize through you to the other members of the Committee for asking to speak so urgently. The fact is that over 25 minutes ago I was to have left here with the President of the General Assembly to attend a function outside the city, and he is waiting for me. I told him I simply could not leave without seizing this opportunity to wish you well.

Sir, there is nothing that I could add that is substantially different from what other speakers have already said eloquently. I would therefore simply add my voice to theirs in paying tribute to you, because you have indeed been a giant in this Committee. The process of decolonization is very important to the integrity of this Organization, and none has served that process more ably than you have. I hold and cherish personal memories of our relationship and the times we have spent together in my country and in yours, in my part of the world and in yours, in working together for a

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

process which we both believe in sincerely. No one could have done it better than you have done it for the past two years. We will sorely miss you, and I want to take this opportunity to wish you the best in your future career, whatever it may.

Please accept again my apologies for interrupting the meeting, but I just felt that I had to do so, because you are not only a person that we look to emulate in this Organization, but a personal friend who will be missed very much. I could not let you leave without saying "Bon voyage and the best of luck to you".

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Permanent Representative of Grenada for his kind words addressed to me. I wish to echo the spirit that he has just expressed concerning the friendship between our countries and between him and his family and me and my family. I can assure him that that friendship, that extended family, will remain wherever we are. But I also wish to take this special opportunity to thank his Government for assisting the work of the Committee and also for their assistance to the dependent Territories in its region. Grenada and its Government have hosted meetings and a regional Seminar, and we are very grateful for that. I am sure that his Government and country stand ready to assist further in whatever way they can. I thank him very much, and ask him please to convey my apologies to the President of the General Assembly for the delay.

Mr. MWAMBULUKUTU (United Republic of Tanzania): Sir, allow me to join other delegations in paying a fitting tribute to the exemplary leadership you have given to the Special Committee of 24.

Tanzania's commitment to issues of decolonization has been as unflinching as it has been uncompromising. We have committed ourselves fully to the quest for decolonization in Africa, the

(Mr. Mwambulukutu, United Republic of Tanzania)

Pacific and the Caribbean - indeed, the world over. To see you, Sir, leaving so soon after starting to lead our Committee is a cause of sadness for my delegation, which has all along worked very closely with you, through my Ambassador, who has just retired. Our two countries have worked together elsewhere and within this Committee.

My delegation's most cherished memory is of our efforts to tackle questions relating to South Africa and the policies of apartheid. Your initiatives and perseverance in ensuring a meeting of minds between hard-liners on both sides, and in establishing the final position to be taken by the Committee, are most commendable. Your departure is crowned with glory in that during the term of your chairmanship the issue of apartheid has almost approached resolution. By the time the elections take place in the next few weeks, surely the name of Ambassador Lohia will ring throughout the townships in South Africa, as it will around the United Nations.

(Mr. Mwambulukutu, United Republic of Tanzania)

I thought I should put on record my delegation's appreciation of the work you have done, Sir, and support the statement already made by our coordinator, the representative of Sierra Leone.

I know you are going back home, Sir, but you will still be available. As we told our Ambassador when he was leaving and going into retirement, there is always life after retirement; he could do as Michael Jordan has done and try to play baseball. In your case, Sir, I am sure you are still available for your country and the world at large, so that the international community can avail itself of your exemplary experience, as we have done here. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Tanzania for his kind words. I assure him of Papua New Guinea's commitment to work with his Government on questions of decolonization, including South Africa, in the spirit of the commitment that we have already made.

Tanzania's Mwalimu Dr. Nyerere is a scholar and a leader in Africa. I have admired him and read him, and I am still a student of his. His work in the South Centre is so very important.

I thank the representative of Tanzania, his delegation and his country's recently retired Permanent Representative. Tanzania has served as Chairman. I have worked with that country's Ambassador and I know that we share the spirit in which the representative of Tanzania has just made his statement. I thank him very much and assure him that I shall be available when the time comes.

The next speaker is the representative of Trinidad and Tobago - a good friend, a dedicated scholar and an individual in this Committee.

Mrs. KING-ROUSSEAU (Trinidad and Tobago): Thank you, Sir, for that introduction. I wish it were true!

As a small island developing country, Trinidad and Tobago has witnessed with great pride your dedication and effective stewardship of the Special Committee. Your dedication to decolonization is unquestioned, and I am sure that the Non-Self-Governing Territory representatives - those that have participated not only in the work of the Special Committee in New York, but also in the various Seminars - have always taken note of that dedication.

Over the years the delegations of Papua New Guinea and of Trinidad and Tobago have worked very well together, but particularly in recent years, as we have sought to overcome the many obstacles facing the Committee. We have always respected the fair and efficient manner, Sir, in which you have discharged your responsibilities. We have also benefited from your insight, and the amiable fashion in which you have approached your work has made our task that much easier and more pleasant. Indeed, that is the Pacific way.

You have left the Committee in good stead, and for this the international community and the Non-Self-Governing Territories must thank you. I thank you on behalf of my Ambassador and the rest of my delegation. We wish you and your family well and hope that you have a safe trip back to your beautiful country. I am only sorry, personally, that I did not have the opportunity to visit it during the last Seminar.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Trinidad and Tobago for her kind words. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago is well known in the Committee, and I want to thank its representatives for their dedication to the work of the Committee. At times, when we were looking for the spirit, words and

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expressions to harmonize resolutions, they were among the few in the Committee who made the Committee's work easier. I have appreciated their work and the work of their country and their delegation in the work of the Committee. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago has also chaired the Special Committee, and I want, on behalf of the Committee, to thank the delegation and its Government for the dedication they have shown.

The next speaker is my good friend and colleague the Permanent Representative of Fiji.

Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji): On behalf of my delegation, I wish, Mr. Chairman, to pay tribute to you and to put on record our sincere thanks and appreciation for your excellent performance for the last three years in guiding the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. We also acknowledge your contribution as Chairman of the Fourth Committee in 1984 and 1985. We are grateful for that effort.

During your tenure the Committee had to streamline its work, ending up with an omnibus resolution and having to merge the Subcommittees. During those same three years there were two decolonization Seminars, in the Caribbean and in the Pacific, where we saw the greatest number of participants from the Non-Self-Governing Territories and heard them articulate their concerns. At this time, also, the administering Powers decided to withdraw from active participation in the Committee's work. It is encouraging, however, that you, Mr. Chairman, have always had the time to consult with them and have managed to get their crucial support for the many resolutions we have adopted by consensus in the Committee.

(Mr. Seniloli, Fiji)

You have made great efforts on behalf of the Pacific Non-Self-Governing Territories. In particular, your efforts with regard to Guam, Tokelau and New Caledonia have been considerable and have helped them move forward, preparing them for the day when they make their final decision on self-government. For all these fine efforts, my delegation wishes to thank you, Ambassador Lohia. We wish you well on your return home.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Fiji for the kind words he has just said in relation to my work.

Fiji is a neighbour of Papua New Guinea, and its delegation to the United Nations has been a friend of the Papua New Guinea delegation. The cooperation we have established in this Committee and in other arenas has given us strength from year to year. I want to offer special thanks to you, Mr. Ambassador, and your delegation for the support you have given me over the years, and I wish you and the group of very distinguished and capable Ambassadors of the South Pacific a happy and successful future in the United Nations. You are our leaders and our representatives. May God bless you.

(The Chairman)

That concludes the statements by Committee members. Does the Secretary of the Committee wish to make any additional remarks?

Mr. DE SOUZA, Secretary of the Committee (interpretation from French): I must admit that I had not planned to add anything to the tributes that we have heard this morning. But I might just say, on behalf of my colleagues in the Secretariat who have been serving this Committee for so many years, and on behalf of those in other Secretariat services who contribute to the smooth functioning of the meetings of this Committee, that we are sad that Ambassador Lohia, who has made such a great contribution to the Committee's work and who arrived at a time when things were not always so easy, is leaving - and leaving so soon. On their behalf, I wish him all the best for the future. We hope that from time to time he will return here to the United Nations to meet the Committee and to talk with its members, with whom it is always a pleasure to work. Once one has worked with this Committee, one wants to continue for a long time. So on behalf of my colleagues, I wish you, Sir, all the best for the future: all the best for yourself and for your family when you return to your beautiful country, which I have had the honour to get to know.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Secretary of the Committee for his kind remarks, and wish him every success in whatever position the Secretary-General may give him within the Secretariat. I want to say, on behalf of the Bureau members and the other members of the Committee, how thankful I am for his extensive contribution to the work of the Committee. In addition, I hope that it will be possible for him, within the Secretariat, working with the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to ensure that services to the Committee are not downgraded, because the work of the Committee is still very

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important, as members know. I am quite sure that he will represent us well within the Secretariat. Once again, Mr. De Souza, thank you very much for your fine efforts in the work of the Special Committee. I wish you every success.

On behalf of myself and my family, of our Mission and of the Government of Papua New Guinea, I would like to say how grateful we are for all the nice things that have been said about me and my country. I can assure members that my successor as Permanent Representative, Ambassador Utula Samana, will do a better job. I know that he will be interested in the work of the Committee, and I hope that members will assist him in trying to understand its work. I hope that he may be interested in working in the Bureau, and I know he will engage in the necessary consultations. I can assure members that our Government is, and will continue to be, committed to the work of the Committee and the United Nations in the field of decolonization, either here, in the region or in Papua New Guinea.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.